
THE NUCHAL TRANSLUCENCY EDUCATION AND QUALITY REVIEW PROGRAM

A program by the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Foundation

*Endorsed by the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
and the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine*



www.NTQR.org

THE VALUE OF NUCHAL TRANSLUCENCY QUALITY REVIEW FOR PHYSICIANS, SONOGRAPHERS AND PATIENTS

To establish collective accuracy, physicians and sonographers performing NT measurements must be trained to maintain a standard measurement approach because discrepancies of even one millimeter in a NT measurement can significantly alter the risk profile. Methods for monitoring NT measurements have been developed, but need to be widely implemented and standardized.

The objectives of a good NT quality review program are to:

- Develop educational and quality improvement strategies that will benefit providers of first trimester risk assessment and their patients.
- Educate providers about important theoretical concerns necessary to provide high quality individualized first trimester risk assessment for Down Syndrome.
- Provide a method to evaluate and track provider proficiency on a national basis.

The Nuchal Translucency Quality Review program satisfies all of the above criteria as well as the following:

- Providers of NT are educated on how to obtain reproducible measurements.
- The quality of first trimester risk assessments are electronically monitored for more consistent practice - and statistical analyses will identify outliers for appropriate educational or other interventions.
- A standardized approach to NT measurement helps reduce the likelihood of NT measurement error and patients are reassured of the accuracy of the measurement they receive when produced by a credentialed provider.
- The NT provider is enrolled in this program and has shown proficiency and maintained quality within the expected standard. Both patients and third party payers want to be certain that NTs are performed by credentialed and qualified individuals and third party payers may not pay for non-credentialed provider measurements.

Other benefits of enrollment in the NTQR program include:

- Laboratories understand that their combined risk is more likely to be correct if they have a NTQR credentialed provider performing Nuchal Translucency and may only accept specimens from qualified providers.
- A potential reduction in liability exposure by being credentialed.
- Complies with some third party payer requirements.
- Efforts to promote NT data collection and assessments for the purposes of quality assurance also stimulate the development of an improved infrastructure that could be used for additional types of physician performance assessment.

In the initial year, over 1,500 doctors and sonographers have already enrolled in the voluntary program. The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine has supported the short-term development of the program. Further, because an autonomous and objective organization must oversee the quality process, an independent, not-for-profit foundation has been created. The NTQR program includes representatives from Ob/Gyn, Radiology, Genetics, Maternal-Fetal Medicine and Sonography. Educational and research grants have been applied for to help defray development costs; however the stakeholders - laboratories and NT providers - must financially support a program that is vital in ensuring that the NT testing provided to mothers in the United States is of the highest possible quality. Ongoing support of the program from physicians and laboratories is based on utilization.



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PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- First trimester risk assessment (NT, serum analytes) is rapidly becoming accepted across the US
- ACOG has recognized first trimester risk assessment as an acceptable alternative to second trimester triple or quad testing (Committee Opinion #296)
- Numerous US & European studies have found that ongoing monitoring of results is necessary to maintain quality, similar to programs in place for laboratory "bench" tests
- The Nuchal Translucency Quality Review program (www.NTQR.org) offers the only multi-society epidemiologic quality monitoring program based in the US
- Participation in the NTQR program is open to any ultrasound practice (High-risk Ob, general Ob/Gyn, Radiology) after basic educational and imaging criteria are met

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- CME approved educational course - both web based and didactic with the content determined by prior education/experience
- Web-based exam
- Proficiency evaluation
 - QA personnel evaluate images and selected data
 - Feedback is provided
- Credentialed participation in the program upon completion of image proficiency evaluation
- Submission of NT measurements and selected data on requisition form to participating laboratories
- Ongoing provider-level epidemiologic monitoring and quality review via reports and charts
- Ongoing analysis of new methods to improve risk assessment

PROVIDER INFORMATION

How Does the Provider Contact and Begin the NTQR Process?

- Register on the www.NTQR.org web site.
- If you have been previously "credentialed" by another organization, provide your prior credentialing number.

How Does the Provider Become Credentialed as a Program Participant by the NTQR?

- If you have no prior NT education or training:
 1. Take the online course at www.NTQR.org, or a land based course
 2. Pass the Web-based exam
 3. Submit NT your images from at least 10 patients for approval
 4. Provide contact information for your Practice Administrator/Office Manager
 5. Receive your credentialing number and confirmation
- If you have prior education and training but have not been previously credentialed:
 1. See numbers 2-5 above
- If you have prior training AND prior credentialing by another organization (but not credentialed by NTQR):
 1. Register at www.NTQR.org
 2. Provide the name of prior credentialing organization (BUN, FaSTER, FMF etc.) and the credentialing number
 3. Pass exam

What Happens After the Provider is Credentialed?

1. The provider may submit NT and CRL measurements to those participating laboratories who only accept data from credentialed providers.
2. Participating laboratories submit NT measurements and corresponding demographic data to NTQR staff for on-going epidemiologic monitoring.
3. Provider-specific epidemiologic analysis reports will be generated and distributed to each site's medical director to the provider.

Where Can Physicians Receive the Necessary Educational Content?

1. The NTQR web-based course (www.NTQR.org)! The NTQR online education course provides state of the art NT education in the comfort of your own home or office. Take the course at your convenience, no travel expense or time away from work are necessary.
2. A land-based course by a CME provider.

**ACCME Accreditation. This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint sponsorship of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Foundation.*

AMA CME Category 1 Credit and ACOG Cognate Credit. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) designates The NTQR web-based NT Educational Course and Exam for a maximum of 5 category 1 credits toward AMA Physician's Recognition Award and a maximum of 5 category 1 ACOG cognate credits. Each physician should claim only those credits that he/she actually spent in the activity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

For Complete Information, FAQs, and To Register go to:

WWW.NTQR.ORG

409 12th Street, SW | Washington, DC 20024

www.NTQR.org

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